Beyond Baby Tresses

Tips for better hair during and after pregnancy

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Eat enough protein. Some good sources of this nutrient include eggs, nuts, red meat and tofu.

Massage your scalp. New York City dermatologist Rita Linkner, MD, suggests a combination of coconut, jojoba, vitamin E, and sweet almond oils.

Wash tresses less frequently to maintain natural oils. Use mild shampoos and moisturizing conditioners, especially if you have dry hair.

Develop good hair care habits. This means air-drying hair after washing, avoiding heat styling tools and saying no to tight hairstyles.

Steer clear of chemical services and products during the first trimester of pregnancy. While there is no scientific evidence that relaxers, dyes and other chemicals can affect a developing fetus, some people believe a small amount of these substances could be absorbed into the bloodstream, especially if the scalp is irritated.

If you have relaxed hair, consult a stylist and check with your ob-gyn about using relaxers during the second or third trimester. Also, note that hormones can change the way some chemicals work on the hair.

Consider alternatives to relaxing your hair. Women can go natural, or try weaves or wigs to avoid damaging their hair with harsh chemicals. Another good move for mom and baby? Switch to organic hair care products.

Check with your doc about including supplements in your diet. Many health experts suggest pregnant women take a prenatal vitamin to ensure they receive all the essential nutrients they need. The bonus? Hair benefits can follow.

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